



## **Somalia Timeline**

In the late eighteenth century, as European nations hurriedly divided up Africa amongst themselves as imperial colonies, Great Britain, France, and Italy all laid claims to various parts of the area now known as Somalia. For about forty years, the British controlled northern Somalia because of its access to the Red Sea, and the Italians ruled southern Somalia while the French had little impact on the region.

In the 1920s, Fascist Italy consolidated control, reaching into the northern parts of the country while simultaneously taking over Ethiopia and Djibouti; this gave Italian leader Benito Mussolini control of all of East Africa

During World War II, the majority of Somalia came under British control once again, and what was left of the Italian territory was placed under an international trusteeship after the war.

Both territories gained independence in 1960 and merged to form modern-day Somalia, but the country suffered from a tumultuous political atmosphere and Somalia's sitting president was assassinated in a military coup just 10 years later.

Muhammad Siad Barre became Somalia's new president in 1969 and founded Barre's Supreme Revolutionary Council as the sole political party in Somalia; Barre also abolished the National Assembly and the country's constitution.

Barre spent much of his reign attempting to rid his country of tribalism and ethnic segregation, turning Somalia into a socialist state in the process. According to Human Rights Watch, in the 1980s Barre cracked down on opposing factions, killing thousands and creating hundreds of thousands of refugees.

He was deposed in late January of 1991, signaling the start of the Somali Civil War.

**1991 – January** – Militiamen from the United Somalia Congress enter Mogadishu, the country's capital, and occupy the presidential palace. Coup leaders Mohamed Farrah Aidid and Ali Mahdi Mohamed are unable to build a unified government, causing civil war.

-- **May** – Northern part of Somalia, a previous British protectorate, declares its independence as an autonomous nation-state, the Republic of Somaliland.

**1992 – December** -- Mahdi and Aidid use food as leverage for power, leaving nearly 1.5 million Somalis to starve. As a result, President George H.W. Bush approves the deployment of U.S. soldiers (in conjunction with U.N. forces) to Somalia as part of Operation Restore Hope.

-- **December** -- U.N. peacekeepers successfully bring Somali warlords together to begin disarmament talks and create a unified government.

**1993 – June** -- Twenty-four Pakistani peacekeepers are killed by Aidid-led militiamen.

-- **October** -- An uprising led by Mogadishu warlords leads to the death of 18 U.S. Marines in the infamous "Black Hawk down" incident. President Clinton removes the remaining military forces from Somalia in March 1994.

**1995 – March** – Operation United Shield, the code name for the United Nations' peacekeeping mission, ends as troops finish withdrawing from Somalia amid the ongoing civil war.

**1996 – August** – Mohamed Aidid dies from war wounds. He is succeeded by his son Hussein.

**1997 – December** – Warlord leaders meet in Cairo to discuss disarmament talks and form a national government.

**2000 – October** – Abdiqasim Salad Hassan and Ali Khalif Galaydh enter Mogadishu as the newly appointed president and prime minister, respectively, of the provisional Transitional National Government.

**2001 – March** – Hussein Aidid and other warlords, backed by Ethiopia, create an opposing coalition to the TNG, the Somalia Reconciliation and Restoration Council in Mogadishu. Within a few years, they will merge with the TNG and create the Transitional Federal Government.

**2002 – October** – Twenty-one warring factions consent to cease-fire.

-- **March** -- In the months after the Sept. 11 attacks, the United States freezes funds of a major bank in Somalia, citing al-Qaida links.

**2004 – August** – Under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the Transitional Federal Government concludes a two-year peace process with the creation of a 275-member parliament in Kenya. The newly formed parliament elects Abdullahi Yusuf, who has close ties to Ethiopia, as president. Yusuf appoints Ali Mohamed Gedi as prime minister.

-- **December** – Earthquake off the coast of Sumatra in the Indian Ocean sets off a tsunami on Dec. 26 that kills hundreds of thousands in southern Asia. The tsunami kills hundreds of Somalis and leaves tens of thousands homeless.

**2005 – June** -- U.S. intelligence-gatherers begin to fear that the Somali government is too unstable to stop the Islamic Courts Union from sheltering al-Qaida operatives. Even with backing from U.S. operatives, anti-Islamist operatives are unable to stop the spread of the Islamic Courts.

-- **November** -- Prime Minister Gedi survives assassination attempt in Mogadishu.

**2006 – February --** After months of heated debate and instability, the parliament agrees to return to Somalia, meeting for the first time in the town of Baidoa but infighting continues.

- **June --** The Islamic Courts Union takes control of Mogadishu and strengthens control over southern Somalia.

- **December –** The U.N. Security Council, with U.S. backing, approves a resolution to send a peacekeeping force into Somalia. Before peacekeepers are deployed, Ethiopian military forces and the TFG launch an offensive, pushing the Islamic Courts Union out of Mogadishu and southern Somalia.

**2007 – January –** The United States launches an air assault in southern Somalia in an attempt to kill al-Qaida suspect Fazul Abdullah Mohammed, the suspected leader behind the 1998 American Embassy attacks in Kenya and Tanzania.

*Sources: CIA World Factbook, BBC, NewsHour reports*

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